

South Shore Offers The Best

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Back before World War II ask a Bostonian anything about communities like Scituate, Duxbury, Marshfield, Pembroke or Hanover, and he'd think you were going to make some reference about spending a summer vacation at one of those places.

These towns still have that old charm which is peculiar to coastal and near-coastal areas of that southeastern section of the state, but since the '40's something has happened.

'Along with so many other cities and towns in the Commonwealth, these five communities have enjoyed a population explosion,' reminds a veteran South Shore realtor.

'What were once almost in a class with resort areas or summer folks' towns are now places where more and more people are settling down for their permanent, year-round residences.'

This, incidentally, is not just chamber-of-commerce puffer, either. Just look at the statistics on population increases in the 1950-1960 period as com-

piled by the Massachusetts Department of Commerce:

Duxbury, up 49.3 percent; Hanover, 74.8 percent; Scituate, 87.1 percent; Pembroke, 90.7 percent; Marshfield, 106.5 percent.

And it looks as though the trend will not be reversing, according to projections made by experts.

Reasons for the popularity of this general sector are numerous. It's easily accessible to Boston via the Southeast Expressway. . . all the towns have planning boards and zoning codes which protect the residential owner's property. . . schools are modern, churches are abundant, and there are shops and shopping centers galore.

'Of course we haven't said a word about that extra element that brought summer people here is the first place and now finds them staying the year 'round,' the broker adds.

'Let's take just three communities and look how they're geographically located.

'Scituate: bordered on the east and north by the Atlantic Ocean. . . Duxbury: bordered on the east and southeast by the Atlantic Ocean. . . Marshfield: bordered on the east by the Atlantic Ocean.

'There's just something about seacoast towns; they have a

magnetic power which seems to be carried right into nearby areas. You might say in this case that it spills right over into Hanover and Pembroke.'

Another factor that meets with so much favor from the house-hunting public is that these towns have such a settled look about them.

'And why shouldn't they?' a South Shore history buff asks. 'Do you realize that most of these towns were settled 200 years before the California gold rush.' (For the record, Duxbury is the oldest: settled 1624; Pembroke the 'newest,' settled in 1650.

And that same history buff friend of ours comes up with some mighty interesting facts about these five old towns. Here's a random sampling:

When Pembroke was settled as an Indian outpost in 1650, longing to Duxbury and known as Mattakeesit. Robert Barker purchased it from the Indians for a quart of wine. Assessed valuation of the town in 1962 was \$22,548,783 (latest figures available) which puts Pembroke in the bargain class along with Manhattan, which went for \$24, they say.

Scituate has always managed to get itself involved in Indian and Colonial wars; the village

suffered during the Indian wars and, in a decisive battle near the Stockbridge Mansion, was barely saved from total destruction. And the war of 1812, bitterly opposed by the town, injured local industries, which then consisted of shipbuilding, brickmaking and fishing.

The town of Hanover was named by the early settlers in honor of King George I of the ruling House of Hanover. In common with many of the 17th century Plymouth Country communities, the bogs in and around Hanover held large deposits of iron ore. This ore was mined by the town's residents and such items as anchors, hollow ware, fittings for ships and cannon balls were forged in the town's furnaces.

Among the first white men to spend any amount of time in Duxbury were two gentlemen made famous by the poet, Longfellow--John Alden and Miles Standish; they were seeking additional land for the growing Plymouth Plantation's newly acquired herds of cattle. . . Flitting up through the centuries, the first cable connecting France and the United States was brought ashore at Duxbury in 1869.

Marshfield, from the beginning (with its fertile lands and marshes) became a mecca for farming, which was its principal

occupation right up to the 19th century. Then shipbuilding on the North River began to grow in rapid strides. But later, many of the town's residents made their way to East Boston where the shipbuilding trade was growing even faster than in Marshfield.